



## USAID WILDLIFE ASIA

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), working closely with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), addresses wildlife trafficking as a transnational crime through USAID Wildlife Asia. The activity works to reduce consumer demand for wildlife parts and products, strengthen law enforcement capacity and coordination, enhance policy, legislation and jurisprudence and improve regional action to reduce wildlife crime in Southeast Asia and China.

Elephant ivory, rhino horn, and tiger and pangolin products are among the top items illegally-traded worldwide, especially in Southeast Asia and China. Transcontinental organized wildlife crime destroys wildlife populations and wildlife-based livelihoods, creating social and political instability. Wildlife trafficking undermines the rule of law, supports corruption and money laundering, spreads zoonotic diseases and has links to organized criminal networks. It is a security issue as much as a conservation issue.

The United States addresses these significant threats through the Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking (END) Act of 2016 and the U.S. Presidential Executive Order on Enforcing Federal Laws with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking 2017. For over a decade, USAID has been working to counter wildlife trafficking in Asia, and with USAID Wildlife Asia, USAID continues to build on these efforts.

### REDUCING CONSUMER DEMAND

Surging demand, high prices and lucrative profits from wildlife products are driving the drastic decline in species such as elephants, rhinos, tigers and pangolins. USAID Wildlife Asia helps reduce this demand by communicating, mobilizing and advocating ways to change practices and build new social norms around the use of wildlife products. Activities include targeted behavior change campaigns that use social and behavior change communication strategies. Wildlife champions, business leaders, women and youth help amplify demand reduction campaigns in China, Thailand and Vietnam.

### STRENGTHENING REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

USAID Wildlife Asia strengthens regional police, customs and prosecutors' ability to effectively locate, apprehend and prosecute illegal wildlife traffickers through training. Working with Interpol, ASEAN National Police and the ASEAN Working Group on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and Wildlife Enforcement, USAID Wildlife Asia supports law enforcement

collaboration in the region and brings together enforcement authorities in Asia and Africa to share intelligence on active investigations and collaborate in dismantling transcontinental trafficking syndicates. Law enforcement efforts are further supported through introduction of new technologies, including wildlife forensics and smart phone applications.

## ENHANCING POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT

USAID Wildlife Asia activities engage decisionmakers and promote countries' commitment to end wildlife crime. The Supreme Court of Thailand is the key Thai government counterpart for USAID Wildlife Asia, and activities strengthen the Green Benches program, improving court rules of procedures and introducing sentencing guidelines for wildlife crimes. USAID Wildlife Asia is supported by the International Conservation Caucus Foundation and the Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and engages with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, and champion parliamentarians in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam to improve respective legal and policy frameworks, to share legal and policy innovations and good practices and to harmonize penalties for wildlife crimes.

## SUPPORT REGIONAL COOPERATION

The END Act of 2016 encourages regional cooperation among external stakeholders as well as U.S. government agencies involved in counter wildlife trafficking. USAID Wildlife Asia collects, synthesizes and shares information on counter wildlife trafficking efforts with U.S. agencies in the region, providing a knowledge management hub. USAID Wildlife Asia supports END Act focus countries, U.S. Inter-Agency Counter Wildlife Trafficking Strategies and convenes external counter wildlife trafficking stakeholders from across the region to participate in major counter wildlife trafficking events.

**PARTNERS** The activity is implemented by RTI International, in partnership with FHI 360, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Freeland, Conservation Council of Nations, and TRAFFIC, all of which lend particular expertise in targeting the illicit trade in wildlife and wildlife products.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- The 2018 consumer research in China and Thailand provided data on beliefs, attitudes and other factors influencing the use of illegal wildlife products. The project and external partners use the data to plan behavior change campaigns to reduce demand for illegal wildlife.
- The Wildlife Protection Law Campaign in China that increases awareness of penalties for consuming illegal wildlife has reached more than 37.4 million through various channels.
- Google ads to deter potential online buyers of wildlife products were triggered by over 560,000 searches for illegal wildlife as part of the Digital Deterrence Campaign in Thailand.
- An assessment of the project's law enforcement capacity building programs revealed that 93 percent of officials applied improved law enforcement practices.
- More than 300 prosecutorial and law enforcement officials in Southeast Asia have been trained to effectively locate, apprehend and prosecute illegal wildlife traffickers.
- The project provided expert inputs to Thailand's Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act 2019, Lao PDR's National Ivory Action Plan and the draft Environmental and Natural Resource Code of Cambodia.
- The project has leveraged more than \$7 million, of which 80 percent was from the private sector.

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